

CHAPTER XX.

RESTORATION OF THE FIRST DOMINION.

PAUL said that we who believe are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest, or assurance, of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession. Eph. 1:13, 14. Jesus has purchased our inheritance, but it waits to be redeemed—it is still under the curse of sin. Yes, this whole creation groans under its burden of sin and woe. Rom. 8:22, 23. But it will be redeemed, for the enemy shall not triumph forever, and “the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.” Ps. 37:11. But that can never be in the present state of the earth, for in this world they are pilgrims and strangers, and here they shall suffer tribulation. 1 Peter 2:11; John 16:33.

Peter speaks of three conditions of this world, and these are so different that he calls them three earths, or worlds. 2 Peter 3:5-7, 10, 13. He says that in the last days scoffers shall say, “Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” Verses 3, 4. We do not look to creation to read the promise of his coming; this is found, in plain terms, in the sure word of prophecy. But they are wrong in their statement. All things do not continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. Inspiration said that the earth should wax old as a garment; and the earth shows unmistakable signs of age.

The earth was first peopled in Asia. After the flood, Asia was again first peopled. There man fell; there the wonders of God were displayed in his dealings with patriarchs and prophets; there Abraham was called, and there he offered up Isaac; and there the Son of God offered up himself; and there

the gospel was first proclaimed, and thousands embraced it and were faithful unto death. But with another generation the light of the gospel began to decline in that part of the world, and it traveled westward; and westward has been its course to the present day; and now it has circled the earth. Its light is now shining on the eastern shore of the Pacific, where it has not flourished before the present generation. The Saviour foretold that the gospel of the kingdom, the message of the King coming in his glory, should “be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” It will not convert the nations, but it will triumph, just as it did in the days of Christ and his apostles,—it will gather out from all nations a chosen company to the glory of his name. Acts 15:14; Rev. 7:9.

Of those who scoff at the Lord’s coming, Peter said they are willingly ignorant. 2 Peter 3:5. They are ignorant of the fact that all things consist by the word of God; that, not by chance, but by that “word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water; whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.” Verses 5, 6. When the windows of heaven were opened, and the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the raging waters rose above the tops of the highest mountains (Genesis 7), the whole face of nature was changed; and when Noah looked from the ark upon the earth, it was a scene of desolation, utterly unlike anything he had ever seen before. Truly, the world had perished.

And Peter proceeds to speak of the heavens and earth which are now, in distinction from those which perished, which by the same word are kept in store, reserved, not to perish again by water, but reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. 2 Peter 3:7. And the fire will have a still greater effect upon the earth than the water had upon the earth that existed before the flood. “The elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” Verse 10.

And this is the day of perdition of ungodly men. When

the earth is melted, it will be literally a sea of fire, and that will be the lake of fire into which the ungodly are to be cast. Rev. 20:15. But Peter continues:—

“Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” Verse 13.

That new earth will be related to the earth that now is, as this is related to that which was before the flood; there will be the same material under far different conditions. The change wrought by the flood left the earth still bringing forth thorns and thistles,—still under the curse. But when the earth is melted with fervent heat, and all the works that are therein are burned up, it will come forth renovated, renewed, without a trace of sin or the curse remaining. Thus speaks the prophet:—

“For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.” Mal. 4:1.

The Scriptures say that the wicked, as well as the righteous, shall be rewarded in the earth. Prov. 11:31. But their rewards are so essentially different that it is impossible that they should be rewarded in the earth at or during the same time. The psalmist says:—

“But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.” “The Lord knoweth the days of the upright; and their inheritance shall be forever.” “The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever.” Ps. 37:11, 18, 29.

But how different is the fate of the wicked:—

“For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.” Verse 10.

The wicked will never behold the earth renewed, restored to its original state of purity, for in that new earth dwelleth righteousness; no sin nor curse will be there. Yet they will be recompensed fully, entirely, in the earth. The Scriptures say that they shall have their portion in the lake of fire; and the day that cometh shall burn them up. This present world is the place of their choice; for this they have rejected eternal

life and all the joys of Paradise. But “they shall be destroyed forever” (Ps. 92:7), and their very place shall not be, for the old earth shall pass away with them. As says the prophet:—

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.” Rev. 21:1.

The animals which God created upon the earth, over which he gave man dominion in the beginning, will be restored to their innocency; for it is written:—

“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’s den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” Isa. 11:6-9.

And again the word of the Lord comes by the same prophet:—

“The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock; and dust shall be the serpent’s meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord.” Isa. 65:25.

When the earth was created there was no city upon it; a city was not then needed. But it is very evident that a city was intended when the earth should become peopled, and that city would have been the capital of the whole empire. The garden that the Lord planted in Eden, wherein was the tree of life, would have been the center. To this all the nations would have resorted. This would have been the permanent home of Adam, the patriarch of the race. In the comparatively brief record of God’s revelations to Abraham, we find no mention of the city in the divine purpose; yet we know that it was promised to Abraham, for the apostle says of him, “For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” Heb. 11:10. This is spoken of as a part of his faith, but if God had not promised it, his faith could not have embraced it. And we have seen that the covenant with Abraham is God’s method of accomplishing his original purpose in the creation.

This city is called a woman. There is nothing incongruous in this. In Rev. 17:18, a certain power is presented, and the two terms, a woman and a city, are applied to it. Note what St. Paul says of this subject in the book of Galatians:—

“For this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.” Gal. 4:25, 26.

In this chapter the two women, Hagar and Sarah, are made to represent the two covenants and the two Jerusalems. The old Jerusalem, rejected of God for her iniquities, is represented by Hagar; her children are in bondage. Jerusalem which is above, but which is to come down upon the earth, is free; she is represented by Sarah, whose son was the child of promise, the only heir. The followers of Jesus are her children; she is their mother. Paul says, “Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.” Gal. 4:28. We are the children of the heavenly city, the free woman.

It has always been customary to speak of any people as the children of their certain land or city. We find in Isaiah 54, the chapter from which Paul quotes in Galatians 4, that the two Jerusalems are called wives and mothers:—

“Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child; for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord.” Isa. 54:1.

These words Paul applies to the New Jerusalem. The old city was the married wife, for God there built his temple; there he set his name, and he took her children to be his people. But she was put away for their unfaithfulness. All the true children of the promise are the children of the New Jerusalem, which has not yet been married. And why not?—Because Jesus Christ has not yet received that inheritance and that kingdom of which that city is the metropolis. But when the priesthood of our Saviour closes, then the Father shall give unto him the throne of his father David; the nations are then given to him for an inheritance; his enemies will be put under his feet; the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of

our Lord and his Christ, and he takes possession of the city, the capital. This is the time of the fulfilment of that prophecy of Daniel:—

“And in the days of these kings shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.” Dan. 2:44.

The setting up of the kingdom is the investing of the Lord Jesus with the authority, and bestowing upon him the capital. This gift is made in Heaven, as is shown in Dan. 7:13, 14:—

“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”

The Son of man is brought before the Ancient of Days, where the throne of judgment is set (see verses 9, 10), to receive the kingdom. This scene is located in Heaven—not on the earth. And the words of Jesus show the same thing, in the following parable:—

“He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.” Luke 19:12-15.

After the account of reckoning with his servants, he added:—

“But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.” Verse 27.

Himself was the nobleman who was to receive the kingdom. The far country to which he went to receive the kingdom, is Heaven. The kingdom is this earth, for here he has given his servants their talents to improve, and here they use them or hide them. And very decisive is the statement that his citizens hated him. Here his enemies refuse to have him rule over

them, and here they will be slain. It is impossible to consider that the kingdom he receives is anything but this earth, unless we admit that the inhabitants of Heaven hate him, and that he will destroy them. He does not go to the locality of the kingdom, but to a far country, to receive it, and returns to the locality; having received the kingdom. This earth, the first dominion, which he has purchased with his blood, is to be his everlasting kingdom. Though it is conceded that forever and everlasting have different significations, their duration being determined by the subjects to which they are applied, there can be no question as to the eternal duration of the kingdom of Christ upon this earth, for thus the angel spoke:—

“And the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall rule over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom *there shall be no end.*” Luke 1 : 32, 33.

We have noticed that Abraham was taken to Palestine to behold his inheritance, because that was the land in which was to be located the capital. But that capital is the New Jerusalem, which Paul says is above; it is in Heaven. When John was shown this city he said it was by one of the angels that had the seven last plagues. Rev. 21:9. By this we know that the fulfilment of this part of the vision is not before the close of the present dispensation; for these angels do not appear until this dispensation is about to close.

It may be well to remark that the book of Revelation is not to be read from the standpoint of John when the vision was given, but from the standpoints of the progressive fulfillment of its several parts. John stood as the representative of the church through all the ages. What he saw in vision in A. D. 96, the church must see in fact through all the centuries, even to the restoration of the earth, and into eternity beyond. The several lines of prophecy, as the letters to the seven churches, the opening of the seven seals, the sounding of the seven trumpets, and the history of the dragon and the two beasts of chapter 13, each covers the entire dispensation. They began in the days of John, but end in the ushering in of eternity.

But the seven last plagues do not cover the dispensation.

They are all poured out in a brief period, after the Third Angel's Message is given, as we have already seen. The seven angels receive the vials or plagues just before probation closes, as we may judge from Rev. 7:1-3, where the angels are restrained from opening the judgments of God upon the earth; and also from Rev. 15:7, 8, where the plagues are given to the angel before the temple is filled with the glory of God, which latter event indicates that there will be no priestly service during the pouring out of the plagues. Now John saw all the seals opened in his vision, but only one of them was really opened in his age. The church sees them all opened in its experience in the whole dispensation. John saw in vision a beast with two horns, which made an image to the first beast; and in vision he saw an angel give a solemn warning against the worship of the beast and his image. But it is reserved to the church in the last days to see these things in fact. John said that an angel, one of those having the seven last plagues, came to him and talked with him. This angel did not appear to John at his standpoint of A. D. 96, for that was not the date of this angel; but John was carried down in vision to the standpoint of the church at the close of the dispensation. It is here that the angel talked with him in his vision. Losing sight of this necessary order, some have been led to spiritualize this prophecy which we are now considering, as they could not locate it in the time of John, where they assumed that it belonged, and give it a literal or correct interpretation. As John said that the New Jerusalem comes down from Heaven, and Paul said it is above, we must for a moment consider what the Scriptures say on the subject of its being in Heaven:—

1. As the capital is to be in Palestine, we conclude that the New Jerusalem will be located just where the old city stood. Thus we read of the preparation of the land to receive the city:—

“And his [Jesus'] feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of

the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal; yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah; and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." Zech. 14:4, 5.

Some have greatly misapprehended the teaching of this prophecy, supposing it to be a record of a consecutive series of events, because it continues to speak of what shall occur in the day of the Lord. But the day of the Lord is a period of time more than a thousand years in length, beginning when the priesthood of Christ closes, before the seven last plagues are poured out, and continuing until the final restitution of all things—the redemption of the righteous, the destruction of the wicked, and the renewing of the earth. The verses quoted above are widely separated from those which immediately precede them, in time of fulfilment. In like manner we often find the two advents of our Saviour connected in the prophecies, but they are far apart in fulfilment. The city of God comes down upon the earth, not at the beginning but near the end of that great day. The cleaving of the mountain, and the making of a very great valley, will remove every trace of the old Jerusalem, and thus a place will be prepared for the new. That sacred, honoured spot will be restored to the shape and condition it had when it was first created—before the curse had marred it, or the fierceness of the flood had defaced it. The prophet continues:—

"And it shall be in that day that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the eastern sea, and half of them toward the western sea." Zech 14:8, Revised Version.

And so in the book of Revelation. In the description of the city, John says: "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." Rev. 22:1. There must certainly take place such a change in the face of that country as that described by the prophet Zechariah, for in its present shape it would be impossible for rivers to flow in different directions, at least east and west from Jerusalem. The city will be elevated upon a mountain, even upon Mount Zion. That mountain is

now in Heaven, and the holy city is upon it; the mountain upon which the city is situated will come down from Heaven with it. Let us notice what the Scriptures say:—

"But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels," etc. Heb. 12:22.

In verses 25, 26, it is said that, as the voice of God was once heard from Sinai, by which the earth was shaken, so it will once more be heard from Heaven, and that it will shake the heavens and the earth. To this the prophet Jeremiah refers in his description of the terrors of that great day when all the nations shall be overthrown:—

"The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation." Jer. 25:30.

And other prophets speak in like manner; thus:—

"And he said, The Lord will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither." Amos 1:2.

And very explicit are the following words:—

"The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake; but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel." Joel 3:15, 16.

Once shall the voice of God be heard from on high, and once shall the heavens and the earth be shaken by that voice. But it will be heard from Zion, from Jerusalem. There is the city, and there is the Mount Zion upon which the city rests: there is the river of the water of life, and there is the tree of life, which was once planted on the earth, but was taken away because of the sin of Adam, and is to be restored to its place on the earth by the merits of the blood of the second Adam.

Of the view of the city shown to him by the angel, John thus speaks:—

"And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither. I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the

holy Jerusalem, descending out of Heaven from God, having the glory of God; and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." Rev. 21:9-11.

Here follows a description of its most transcendent glory. Its walls are high, with twelve foundations of precious stones. Its gates are of pearl. The glory of God and the Lamb are the light of it. Of it John further says:—

"And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Rev. 21:2.

2. This city comes down from Heaven, as its maker and builder is God. It was built in Heaven, but it was intended for the metropolis of the earth. And why is this earth so honoured with the city of God and the eternal kingdom of Christ? Though small among the works of God, this earth has been the scene of wondrous events. Next to the war in Heaven, by which Satan and his angels were forever shut out of that holy place, the greatest conflict that the universe has known, or will know, has been on this earth. The hosts of Heaven shouted for joy when this earth was made. But here Satan triumphed over man; here sin set its blight upon the works of God; here Christ, the Son of God, by whom he made the worlds, suffered and died for man's sake; here he triumphed over death; and here he will bruise the head of Satan, and bring him to an ignominious end. Rev. 20:7-10; Heb. 2:14. And it is fitting that when the conflict is over, the curse removed, the first dominion restored, the inheritance of Abraham and his children redeemed, here the Son of God should erect his throne, and reign to endless ages among the happy millions whom he purchased with his blood.

Two expressions in regard to this city we notice: 1. John says the city was prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Rev. 21:2. 2. He says that the angel who called him, promised to show him the bride, the Lamb's wife; and then he showed him the city, a description of which he proceeded to give. This is much more than an intimation that the city is the bride. We have already seen that the New Jerusalem is called

the mother of all the faithful children of Abraham, and that it is represented by Sarah, the wife of Abraham, the mother of the only heir. So it is not new in the book of Revelation that a city should be called a woman, or a bride, a wife. And it is no more strange that a city should be called a bride, than that she should be called a mother. Yet we all know that the New Jerusalem is called our mother. And herein we find the solution of another Scripture truth which has been regarded as a mystery. Jesus, the Son of David, is referred to in the prophecy of Isaiah, as follows:—

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even forever." Isa. 9:6, 7.

The position that he is to occupy—the government that he is to hold—sufficiently identify the person here referred to as the Son of God, the Messiah. The wonder has been how he who is the Prince of Peace can be called "the everlasting Father." It cannot represent him in any relation to "the Trinity," as some have supposed, for the Father is uniformly considered "the first person," while the Prince of Peace, he who appeared as the Son of David, and Heir to his throne, is as uniformly held to be the second person. If it should be claimed that he is both Father and Son in the Trinity, then it is evident there could be no Trinity, as he would be but one person with two names. It appears evident that this prophecy has no reference to any such doctrine, but refers to him as a Father in a different sense.

Now as the New Jerusalem is called the bride, our mother, and as Jesus is the bridegroom, he must by right be called our Father. Thus the bridegroom and bride are the father and mother of all the children of the heavenly city. This is both plain and reasonable.

But these children are all faithful ones, who are constituted the seed of Abraham by faith in Christ, and who are born

anew to the kingdom of God. The unfaithful—they who have rejected Christ, whether among the Jews or Gentiles—have no lot nor part in that matter. They are looking also to Jerusalem for the fulfilment of the promises of God, but it is to the old Jerusalem, the “Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.” Gal. 4:25. The New Jerusalem is not the mother of these bond children, and Jesus, the bridegroom, is not their Father. They will have no part in his work of restitution.

But of his Father, Jesus says, “My Father, which gave them me, is greater than I,” and, “My Father is greater than all.” John 10:29; 14:28. He is over all, the universal Father; he is even “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 2 Cor. 11:31, etc.

But Jesus Christ himself, the royal bridegroom to the New Jerusalem, is the everlasting Father of all the redeemed, and of no others.

When the kingdom is given to Christ, he takes possession of his capital, in Heaven, and this is called in a figure the marriage. The saints are the guests who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Rev. 19:6-9. And we have seen that he takes possession of the kingdom in Heaven, before his return to the earth, and he commends the faithful who shall be watching when the Lord returns from the wedding. Glorious blessing that is promised! He will take them to the mansions prepared, and make them sit down to the marriage supper, and he will come forth and serve them. His own hand shall pluck of the fruit of the tree of life, and give them to eat, and bring them water from the river of life. What a feast that will be to those who have suffered in poverty in this world for his name's sake! See Luke 12:31-37.

John said that he saw in the midst of the street of the city, and on either side of the river, the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month. Rev. 22:2. A monthly yield of twelve manner of fruits, would give an endless variety of fruit, and yet all from the wonderful tree of life. “And the leaves of the tree were for the service of the nations.” (See the Greek.)

The question has often been asked if the redeemed saints will require access to the tree of life. Why not? The tree of life was planted in Eden, and Adam and his posterity would always have had access to it if sin had not caused its removal. That the tree of life will be one of the blessed privileges and blessings of the redeemed, is decisively proved by the promise of the Saviour in his letter to the church of Ephesus. Rev. 2:1-7. Every individual of this church is now in the grave, waiting to have part in the “better resurrection,” when this mortal shall put on immortality. Jesus says of them:—

“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.” Rev. 2:7.

Jesus has promised that we shall partake of the tree of life after our redemption, which is sufficient evidence that it will be a privilege, a blessing, to saints redeemed. It has been suggested that the immortal saints can have no need of the tree of life. But such a supposition is altogether useless. Of the nature and condition of the immortalized children of Adam's race, we know absolutely nothing. But of some things we are informed in the Scriptures, which have a bearing on this subject. The apostle speaks thus of the triumph of Jesus over death, in his resurrection:—

“Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.” Rom. 6:9.

But Jesus ate and drank with his disciples after his resurrection,—after death had no more dominion over him. And he also said to his disciples at the last supper:—

“But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.” Matt. 26:29.

And yet again he said:—

“And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” Luke 22:29, 30.

These promises of the Saviour, that they should eat and drink in his kingdom, are in exact conformity with his own example of eating and drinking after his resurrection. While

some feel inclined to explain away these facts, to make the statements harmonize with their preconceived ideas of the state and nature of the redeemed, we choose to acknowledge our ignorance in matters so high, and to bring ideas and theories into harmony with the express declarations of the Scriptures.

While the leaves and fruit of the tree of life will be for the use and service of the nations, we learn in the verses preceding that "the nations of them that are saved" shall inhabit the new earth, and shall walk in the light of the holy city. Rev. 21:23, 24. None but the blessed and holy will ever see the earth in its beauty, in its renewed state; will ever walk in the light of the glory of the city of God. It was through sin that Adam lost the privilege of the garden, lost access to the tree of life, lost the earth in its blessed, happy state; and this should be sufficient assurance to us that sinners will never be admitted to the enjoyment of those glories. They who are the children of Abraham through faith, who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, will have right to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city. And terrible will be their disappointment who indulge a hope to partake of these privileges and glories without those qualifications.

Of the glory and joy reserved for those that love him, we can have but very faint conceptions. Having always been associated with sin and sinful surroundings, with sickness, pain, and death, we cannot imagine what it will be to be forever set free from all such things. But the great change will be made:—

"For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." Isa. 65:17.

This means that it shall not be remembered as an object of desire. Many beautiful things are enjoyed in this earth, but when Jerusalem is created a rejoicing, and her people a joy, and the voice of weeping is no more heard in the land, there will not be one thought of desire for the former state. Here the saints find their everlasting rest, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing. . . . Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert." Isa. 35:1-6.

And again the same prophet says:—

"Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head; they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away." Isa. 51:11.

And to the prophet John the angel spoke thus:—

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." Rev. 21:4, 5.

Eden is then fully restored. Here the river of the water of life flows out from the Mount Zion. Here Adam regains the tree of life, planted beside the river which parts into separate heads as in the beginning. Here again is paradise, the garden which the Lord himself planted seven thousand years before. Here Abraham inherits the earth according to the promise; here is the city for which he looked, every inhabitant of which regards him as a father. Here Moses will enter into that goodly land which he saw with the eye of a prophet. Here David will behold his throne established, nevermore to be overturned, but to endure as the sun, even as the days of Heaven. Here the prophets meet with the apostles, and together walk the streets of the city upon whose gates are inscribed the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel, the foundations of whose walls are named after the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Here are the martyrs, rejoicing that it was their privilege to suffer unto death that they might inherit such a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Here is the chosen company of those who were redeemed from the earth at the coming of their Lord, who overcame the beast and his image and the mark of his name by strict adherence to the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, in the perilous days when all the world

was overcome with the prevailing iniquity. Coming up to the city to worship is the innumerable host who inherit the land from the river unto the end of the earth. And here is He who once trod the hills round about Jerusalem, with weary feet and pitying heart, seeking the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Here He was slain to redeem this worshipping host with His precious blood. Unto Him every eye is turned; to Him every knee bows; to Him every tongue shouts praise, for to Him they owe their life, and all this joy, this heavenly beauty, this glory.

“And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever.” Rev. 5:13.

Thus ends the conflict of ages. The reign of sin and death is forever past. And it is sad to think that the finally impenitent will never behold the earth in its beauty, in its redeemed, glorified state. They choose “this present world” as their portion, and their portion is to perish with it, dying as they have lived, ignorant of the boundlessness of the joy that God has prepared for those who love him. But to the righteous an eternity of bliss is given, where they may contemplate the wisdom of God, and ever learn more of his goodness to his creatures.